HOW TO STOP BUYING DISGUSTING CHEMICALS

These recipes for household cleaners will make your spring cleaning much easier, cheaper, and better smelling than if you use manufactured "product." I found most of them at http://www.ecocycle.org/hazwaste/recipes.cfm, which includes more recipes (now defunct).

Put the cleaners in a suitable squirt bottle. I use most of these cleaners and they work better than the toxic stuff. Be sure to test if you are concerned about their effect on finishes.

BASIC INGREDIENTS FOR NON-TOXIC CLEANING AGENTS

Five basic ingredients serve as the building blocks for many safe home cleaning needs:

BAKING SODA - Cleans and deodorizes. Softens water to increase sudsing and cleaning power of soap. Good scouring powder.

BORAX - Cleans and deodorizes. Excellent disinfectant. Softens water. Available in laundry section of grocery store.

SOAP - Biodegrades safely and completely and is non-toxic. Available in grocery stores and health food stores. Sold as liquid, flakes, powder or in bars. Bars can be grated to dissolve more easily in hot water. Insist on soap without synthetic scents, colors or other additives.

WASHING SODA - Cuts grease and removes stains. Disinfects. Softens water. Available in laundry section of grocery store or in pure form from chemical supply houses as "sodium carbonate."

WHITE VINEGAR OR LEMON JUICE - Cuts grease and freshens.

Household Cleaner #1
Mix together:
1 tsp. liquid soap (castile, peppermint—a shaved bar of Ivory soap would probably work)
1 tsp. borax
Squeeze of lemon
1 qt. warm water
Gentler than #2 but still effective. I use on bathroom tile.

Household Cleaner #2
¼ c. baking soda
½ c. borax
½ c. vinegar
1 gal. water
Can also use a green scouring pad.
Spray it before leaving the shower, say once a week, and it will stay clean with minimal scrubbing. Can degrade some finishes (chrome, plastic) so try a sample first. It could be too harsh or abrasive in some places—especially if you use a scouring pad and force.

Mrs. Meyer's Clean Day All Purpose Cleaner--Lavender scent
They only say "plant-based surfactants." But this stuff actually does clean and it smells divine (if you like lavender). Good for cleaning bureau drawers, closets, anything you want to smell nice. Expensive but bottle lasts forever. You can water it down.

Simple Green
Water it down and it's still heavy enough to strip the grease off your bike chain. Use sparingly but good to have around.

Murphy's Oil Soap

Window Cleaner
Mix together:
2 tsp. vinegar
1 qt. warm water
OR
2 tbsp. borax
3 c. water
Rub dry with newspaper to avoid streaking.

Disinfectant
Mix together:
¼ c. borax
½ gal. hot water

Drain Cleaner
Pour together: ½ c. borax in drain followed by 2 c. boiling water
OR
¼ c baking soda down the drain, followed by ½ c. vinegar
Cover drain and let sit for 15 minutes. Follow with 2 qts. boiling water.
OR
Use a plumber's "snake" and boiling water.

Toilet Bowls
Pour: ¼ c. baking soda into bowl and drizzle with vinegar.Let sit for ½ hour. Scrub and flush. Add borax for stains.

Ceramic Tiles
Mix together: ¼ c. vinegar
1 gal. warm water

Basin, Tub, and Tile
Mix together: ½ c. baking soda
2-3 tbsp. liquid soap (castile, peppermint)

Mildew Remover
Dissolve together: ½ c, vinegar
½ c. borax in warm water.
Apply with sponge or spray bottle..

Floors
Mix together: ½ c. white vinegar
1 gal warm water
Polishing with skim milk after floor is dry will make the floor glow!.

Fabric Softener/brightener
Add 1 cup vinegar or ¼ cup baking soda during final rinse. To reduce static cling in tumble-dried synthetics, dampen hands when folding or line dry instead.

Spot Removers
Here are alternatives to enzyme pre-soaks and bleach for tough stains. Test each of the following remedies on a corner of your fabric first. Wash after application.

Heavy Soils
Rub with solution of 2 tbsp. washing soda in 1 cup warm water.

Fruit and Wine
Immediately pour salt or hot water on the stain and soak in milk before washing.

Ink--Soak in milk or remove with hydrogen peroxide.

Coffee
Mix egg yolk with luke-warm water and rub on stain.

Mildew
Pour strong soap and salt on the spots and place in sunlight. Keep the spots moist, and repeat as often as necessary.

Soiled Diapers
Pre-soak in 3 tbsp. baking soda dissolved in warm water in either a diaper bucket or washing machine.

Grease
Pour boiling water on stains and follow with dry baking soda. Also try ammonia and water.

Blood
Soak in cold water or remove with hydrogen peroxide. For a more stubborn stain, mix cornstarch, talcum powder or cornmeal with water and apply to stain. Allow to dry and brush away.

Rust
Saturate with sour milk (or lemon juice) and rub with salt. Place in direct sunlight until dry, then wash.

Air Fresheners
Commercial fresheners work by masking smells, coating nasal passages and deadening nerves to diminish sense of smell.
Instead: Find source of odors and eliminate them;Keep house and closets clean and well-ventilated; Grow lots of house plants;
Simmer: Cinnamon sticks Orange peel, cloves Water.
To absorb odors, place 2 to 4 tbsp. baking soda or vinegar in small bowls in refrigerator and around the house and pour ½ cup baking soda in the bottom of trash cans.

Scorches
Boil scorched article in 1 cup soap and 2 qts. milk.